



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
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For Immediate Release

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Tuberculosis Rates Remain Low in Wisconsin
March 24th is World TB Day

MADISON – Following the national trend, tuberculosis (TB) case rates continue to be lower in Wisconsin than they were in the late 1990's. Surveillance data compiled by the Department indicates that in 2005, there were 78 cases of TB, which is down from the 110 cases in 1999.

Wisconsin has been successful in keeping TB rates low through aggressive treatment of active disease and treatment of new infections with preventive therapy. Local health departments are Wisconsin's front line in the fight against the disease and can be credited with much of the success the state has seen in recent years in reducing the TB rates. Twenty of Wisconsin's 72 counties reported cases of tuberculosis last year; two of those counties (Columbia and Kewaunee) had not reported a case in at least the previous five years.

People who are exposed to tuberculosis may become infected and can receive treatment to prevent the infection from advancing to disease. While a person with TB infection will have no symptoms and will not be contagious, a person with TB disease may have any or all of the following symptoms:

- A cough that will not go away
- Loss of appetite
- Night sweats
- Feeling tired all the time
- Coughing up blood
- Weight loss
- Fever

If you think you have been exposed to TB, be sure to see your healthcare provider or local health department for a TB skin test.

Unemployment and lack of health benefits contribute to tuberculosis persisting in the state of Wisconsin. Persons who lack health benefits are often unable to seek adequate medical care in a timely manner, which can facilitate progression from infection to active disease. Sixty-seven percent of Wisconsin TB patients in 2005 were born outside of the United States. Many come from countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, where TB is much more common. Among U.S.-born TB patients in Wisconsin, racial and ethnic minorities have a combined case rate eight times higher than for non-Hispanic whites.

The average multiple drug treatment regimen for TB is 6-9 months long. The state budgets \$391,900 annually for TB elimination. During state fiscal year 2005, \$227,600 went directly to paying for medications. The remainder covered other patient care needs including chest x-rays, doctor visits, lab tests and public health nursing services.

For more information about tuberculosis in Wisconsin, visit <http://www.wisconsin.gov/tb>

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